

PHONG-TRÀO PHỤ-NỮ VIỆT-NAM ĐÒI QUYỀN SỐNG

VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR THE RIGHT TO LIFE
MOUVEMENT DES FEMMES VIETNAMIENNES POUR LA DÉFENSE DES DROITS A LA VIE.

CHỦ-TỊCH CHỦ-TỊCH ĐOÀN
Chairman of the Presidential Committee
Présidente du Comité Présidentiel

Saigon, May 17, 1971

Address

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SAIGON

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To the Foreign Relations Committee
Senate of the United States of America
Washington D.C.

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MICROFILMED

Dear Mr. Chairman and Distinguish Members
of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee;

I deem it a privilege and a responsibility to take this opportunity to address myself to your distinguished Committee.

In my capacity of Chairman of the Vietnamese Women's Movement for the Right to Life and a co-signer of a "State of Peace" Agreement signed between American and Vietnamese Women on January 5, 1971 in Saigon, demanding that President NIXON immediately announces a date prior to the end of 1971, by which all U.S. and Allied military Forces shall be withdrawn from Viet Nam, I would like to present to you some of my views on the situation in Viet Nam, in connection with the Peace issue.

At present, with the "Vietnamization of the war", which means a continuation of the same old policy of seeking a military victory, the situation in South Viet Nam has become aggravated politically, economically, socially ...

Politically, the massive destruction of human life and physical damage engendered by saturation bombing and chemicals, as well as the annihilation of entire villages and their elimination from the geographical map of Viet Nam, have challenged the legitimacy of the so-called "Pacification Program".

The economic situation is deteriorating at a frightening pace ever known up to now, even under the French and Japanese occupation: misery is widespread as living costs are soaring, jobs in the cities are more and more difficult to find and the newly created urban dwellers, forced to move from their farms becoming unproductive because of the defoliation, fear to return to their insecure homes because of the massive bombings. Over a quarter of the South Vietnamese population is confined to refugee camps.

As far as the Agricultural production is concerned, the collapse has ~~Approved For Release 2004/10/28 : CIA-RDP80R01720R001100060028-0~~ South East Asia South Viet Nam has turned to be an importer of rice!

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Black-market, corruption are rampant. The social fabric is falling apart, accompanied by all sorts of social plagues : brigandage, rape, debauch, alcoholism, drugs, prostitution ... which challenge the Vietnamese dignity, that of the women in particular. The social decadence threatens the happiness of a great number of our families and that of our youth. The reversal of moral values jeopardize our whole civilisation, destroyed by a foreign cheapened way of life. For the Vietnamese people, a people which has through 4000 years of a glorious History, jealously preserved its moral traditions, it is indeed a painful humiliation.

Along with the destructive rage of high technological warfare, the political tribute of war becomes more inexorable and inhuman towards the civilian population with the painful spectacle of women being raped to death, young children and old people being innocently massacred. By the same token, the militarization of Vietnamese society, has a more dramatic political consequence : human life is treated with cynical contempt. Human rights are trampled underfoot and civil liberties choked out of existence. The size of the national police has grown with the repressive measures as the Saigon government is relying on increased repression in order to compensate for its rapidly dwindling support accompanying the "desamericanisation". As many as 200,000 political prisoners are now being held under intolerable conditions in interrogation centers and jails, while the rest of the population lives under permanent police state harassment!

But the price of the war is very costly from the American side too : thousands of young Americans sacrificed their lives in this foreign land. Thousands of American families are profoundly grieved by irreparable losses. Thousands of American women have to live in anxiety, worrying about their sons or husbands being detained as war prisoners. For the truth glares and hurts ; the raid on the prisoners war camp in North Viet Nam, the sending troops to intrude into Cambodia and Laos, will bring to the painful result that there can only be an exchange of prisoners when the war ends.

Even in U.S. domestic affairs, the present war policy brings with it the raising of most important industries turnover, together with the reduction of unemployment rate, yet this profit enhances neither the prestige nor the honour of the USA which military intervention has been severely condemned by national as well as international public opinion.

Even though President NIXON has repeatedly stated that the U.S. objective is to insure the South-Vietnamese people's right to decide their own fate without foreign interference, and that the only unegotiable thing is the South-Vietnamese people's right to decide their own political future, in fact, by supporting the present dictatorial regime of President NGUYEN VAN THIEU, President NIXON is brazenly trampling on the Vietnamese people's self-determination right.

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Since the political and moral damage engendered by the "Vietnamization of the war" carried on by an illegitimate and unpopular government in Saigon, invalidates any military victory even before it could be won at all, the only alternative which will safeguard the U.S. honour lies in the search for a political settlement to end this cruel war which lies heavy on human conscience from East to West including America and Viet Nam.

In the U.S.A numerous statements among highest American religious, political authorities and anti-war groups have requested for a revision of American policy through the most eloquent demonstrations ever seen in the History of America.

In Viet Nam, while the prospects of a military victory appear illusory, the political bankruptcy is actual, surfaced by an increase of resistance to the war and a vigorous opposition to the NGUYEN VAN THIEU's government. Initially centered on rather specific grievances, the new trend in favor of Peace has evolved into a concerted people movement for peace that has proved impossible to suppress because of its large base of support, including students, workers, farmers, veterans, politicians, women and religious leaders.

The Peace Movements have taken a public stand against the prolongation of the war under any form, linking the restoration of Peace with the complete withdrawal of U.S and foreign troops from Viet Nam and the establishment of a Government truly representative of the people of South Viet Nam to stand up and answer immediately the general peace aspirations within the context of national sovereignty and right to self-determination, so that the people of Viet Nam can settle their internal affairs among themselves without foreign intervention.

As far as the Vietnamese Women are concerned, in the current polarized phase of the war, we have already shown that we will not sit with folded hands closing our eyes and hearts to the continuing suffering of our people. We will no longer accept to be the undeserved victims of a cruel war which has usurped everything, from our right to life to our reason to life, from our bowl of rice and piece of clothing to our dignity.

While the leaders of South Viet Nam have shown themselves incapable of ensuring a decent life for our people and satisfying the deep longing peace of the whole nation, the Vietnamese Women get united into a block within the Vietnamese Women's Movement for the Right to Life (an Alliance of 17 Women Organizations) in order to solve the problem of our lives and deaths and of our country's future by ourselves.

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It is our earnest wish to bring an end to this inhuman war, so that vested anew in its national sovereignty, the people of Viet Nam can live under the joy of Peace and Independence and can devote themselves to building a society based on human equality and friendly cooperation with all peace-loving peoples of the world, especially the American people whose example of heroism and magnanimity in its fight for the Ideal of Peace, Freedom and Democracy struck us with admiration.

It is with the concern to safeguard the future of U.S.-VIETNAM relationship, based on peaceful cooperation and mutual respect, that I am taking this occasion to suggest that the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee would seriously envisage an appropriate revision of the U.S. Policy in Viet Nam, to avoid a fatal mistake which will make America an Enemy instead of a Friend of Viet Nam, through the imposition on the Vietnamese people of a warlike Government which they are opposed to.

Within that spirit, we would like to see the Americans refraining from interfering in our internal affairs, especially in the forthcoming elections, so as to give every Vietnamese an equal chance to participate in the democratic process, whether as runner or voter, without any discrimination. The fairness of the elections should be controlled by popular groups and opposition people rather than foreign team. Elections will be considered as discriminatory if opposition and non-communist "political prisoners" will not be able to participate in.

It will be our privilege and our responsibility to do whatever we can to help improving the U.S.-VIETNAM relationship through the restoration of Peace and Self-Determination to Viet Nam, Peace and Honour to America.

Sincerely yours

Ngô Ba Thanh
Mrs NGÔ BA THANH

Chairman of the Presidium
Vietnamese Women's Movement for the Right to Life.

SECRET

The author of the attached letter told a Station representative that she wrote it at the request of Mr. Don Luce. Note the reference on page 2 to the "200,000 political prisoners that are now being held under intolerable conditions in interrogation centers and jails...." Mrs. Ngo Ba Thanh has numerous contacts among left wing intellectual groups in Saigon.

SECRET

Congressman McCloskey's Interest in the PICs

Representative Paul McCloskey (R. Cal.) and Representative Jerome Waldie (D. Cal.) and staff, visited Vietnam from 9 to 13 April 1971 and later Thailand and Laos. McCloskey was described by the COS as hostile to individual American officials and overbearing in conducting his enquiries during this visit. (McCloskey later stated, in Vientiane, that the CIA in Vietnam was running out of control.)

On 13 April, the delegation visited Binh Dinh Province and learned from a MACV enlisted advisor that a "rubber hose" had been seen in the Provincial Interrogation Center. There was no statement that this hose had been used on prisoners. However, the implication whetted the curiosity of the delegation and they subsequently visited the Binh Dinh PIC. (During the tour, the PIC advisor told the delegation that abuse of the prisoners was not tolerated.)

It was the Station's opinion that the point of the inquiries at Binh Dinh was that McCloskey and Waldie wanted to build a case that the Phung Hoang program was filled with abuses of prisoners rights and that the program lacked any guarantee of due process of law. They also wanted to focus on the CIA role in Phung Hoang and related programs, such as the PICs and the Special Police, in order to embarrass the Nixon administration.

The COS subsequently commented that the McCloskey visit to Binh Dinh focused on refugee and prisoner processing. The delegation was interested in the Phoenix program, the CIA participation in it and the nature and scope of CIA involvement in refugee processing. At one point, McCloskey wanted to know the names of the CIA cover units in Vietnam. The delegation also expressed an interest in the question of political prisoners in South Vietnam.

On 16 April 1971, the delegation returned to Vietnam to meet with Ambassadors Bunker and Berger. According to the Station summary of the meeting, the points that were

particularly "irritating" to McCloskey were as follows:

1. The Phung Hoang program and the lack of application of due process in handling prisoners captured in Phung Hoang operations.
2. PIC - McCloskey stated that he was not satisfied that civilian prisoners were not abused in the Provincial Interrogation Centers. He further charged that the American advisors were not supervising the interrogations closely enough. He did admit, however, that he had found no American that actually saw a prisoner beaten.
3. The CIA - McCloskey charged that no one would tell him what the CIA did in Vietnam and that this "shroud" of secrecy "bothered" him.
4. Green Beret Case - At one point, McCloskey directly asked Ambassador Bunker if he had authorized the elimination of the Vietnamese double agent. (Bunker of course, denied the charge.)

After the meeting with the Ambassadors, the delegation was taken on a tour of the National Interrogation Center and apparently was satisfied with what they saw. McCloskey subsequently had a telephone conversation with the COS and commented that the NIC was a well run institution and the American advisory effort was sound. He recommended that more visitors be authorized to visit the NIC, particularly those who were critics of the GVN policy. The second point raised during this telephone conversation with the COS was McCloskey's concern that the civilian prisoners picked up by the American forces in combat operations did not receive humane treatment at the PICs. He stated that he could not get an adequate answer to this question at MACV and he would like to have COS views. COS stated that the PICs, like the NIC, were GVN installations and the American advisors who monitored the PICs worked hard to insure that all civilian detainees were humanely treated. It was the consensus of opinion of the PIC advisors that this was the case - to the best of their knowledge. All incidents of possible violation were promptly investigated by the advisors and the GVN.

A later cable from Bangkok, after the delegation had left Vietnam, stated that McCloskey claimed to have learned, from a MACV Phoenix advisor, that Saigon Station controlled the PICs, denied access to Phoenix advisors, and kept VC suspects in the PICs for lengthy periods of "hostile" interrogation.

On 18 April 1971, McCloskey appeared on the TV program - "Face the Nation." In general, the program dealt with the bombing of the Laotian villages and there was no mention of the CIA until the end of the program when the panel was discussing surveillance. The comment was made by McCloskey that while he was in Vietnam, he kept "running into" CIA people. Since the program was over, nothing further was noted about this comment or its implications.

SUBJECT: PIC Rebuttal to NYT Story

In the aftermath of the New York Times story on the "torture" of Vietcong children, Vietnam Station undertook an investigation to determine the accuracy of the facts reported. The conclusions follows:

"1. The following was obtained on 4 July from Danang Special Police Chief Van Song, Danang PIC Chief Tran Toan, and Danang National Police Chief Nguyen An Vinh.

"A. Nguyen Dinh Chinh, born 1957, was arrested on 28 March 1971 by a combined police patrol while he was attempting to blow up an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) compound in Danang. He had six kilos of C-4 explosive and three detonators on him at the time of apprehension. Chinh was turned over to the PIC on 31 April. He still is in the PIC and will be turned over to the military court for prosecution soon, but a firm date has not been set.

"B. Pham Thi Hoa, born 1959, was arrested by the Regional Special Police Special Action Section at Con Market, Danang on 24 April 1971. She was turned over to the PIC on 6 May 1971. She was a commo liaison agent for Quang Da Special Zone Military Proselyting Section, and was carrying a VC letter at the time of her arrest. She received a one year sentence and is presently in Con Market jail.

"2. Regarding the specific items mentioned in the New York Times article, the following emerges from our inquiries:

"A. Chief Vinh and Chief Song were present at the interrogation of Chinh during the night of his initial arrest. Chinh was stubborn and police urgently wanted info on other sappers who might have missions that night. Chinh was slapped around a bit by police and quickly became cooperative. Song stated Chinh's treatment was no harsher than a father might give to an errant son. Chinh definitely was not beaten in the stronger sense of the word, according to Song, and absolutely no water or electricity treatment was used. (Comment: Song's admission that Chinh was slapped rings true and as it fits with how Vietnamese would treat a child, we tend to believe that harsher methods were not

used in this case. We cannot, however, document this impression with hard facts.)

"B. The police claim that Thi Hoa was not mistreated at all, stressing that police have a standard policy of treating children with basic kindness.

"C. During the warm season, which includes the month of June, Danang PIC prisoners are allowed to shower every afternoon, but less frequently during the cold winter season.

"D. A trustee delivers drinking water to PIC prisoners on demand during the day. Potable water for the PIC is obtained from the fire department. In brief, we doubt there was a water shortage for prisoners.

"E. Mosquito nets are not issued to prisoners because of the possibility they could be used for suicide. The mosquito problem is no worse at PICS than in most Vietnamese homes or in VC circumstances in which Hoa lived.

"F. It is standard policy that PIC prisoners are not allowed visitors. When prisoners move to the detention center they are allowed visitors. Police state that no visitors attempted to see Chinh who has no relatives in the area, or Thi Hoa who is an orphan.

"G. The plaster allotment for food quoted in the article is accurate, and the rate is set by the Ministry of Interior. PIC Chief Toan states that the NPC in Saigon has proposed an increase of four plasters per day in the food allowance, but the interior ministry has not approved this rate increase. Danang PIC food is provided by a contractor, who supplies three meals per day. Based on our observations, the PIC diet is lacking in meat but rice is sufficient. Meals normally consist of rice, vegetables, soup, tea and periodically meat or fish. Water is provided at each meal.

"H. At the time of the Emerson visit there were eight prisoners in the PIC under age 20. (It should be noted that VC commo liaison and sapper ranks are heavily loaded with teenagers.)

"3. According to the police, Emerson saw posters in Danang of Chinh and Thi Hoa which were part of a

propaganda campaign to discredit VC use of children. Emerson was subsequently introduced to Chief Vinh by the PSD advisor and indicated she wanted to do an article on the subject of VC use of children and asked for interviews with Chinh and Thi Hoa. Vinh set up the interviews and Emerson provided her own interpreter. Song had reservations about the interview because the case was still being exploited, but the Deputy Regional Special Police Chief, Dung, told him to go ahead. Toan and Song were present at the interviews. Song and Toan say that Emerson asked them questions about the treatment of prisoners and they replied with factual data as indicated in para 2C, D, E, and F. Emerson asked Chinh about 10 questions and her interpreter also asked some questions. When Emerson asked Chinh how he had been treated, Chinh said he had been treated well and the food was okay--not good, but okay. Chinh told Emerson the PIC guards gave him cigarettes and PIC Chief Toan treated him like an adopted son. Song says he was seated within three feet of Emerson's interpreter and Chinh during the interview and at no time did Chinh whisper anything to the interpreter. According to Song, there was no way Chinh could have communicated anything privately to the interpreter.

"4. Thi Hoa was interviewed the day after Emerson's session with Chinh. Song was present at the interview, which he said lasted about five minutes. Questions were limited to about four or five: When she was arrested, where arrested, how arrested, where were her parents. Song said he had to cut the interview short because it was lunch time and Emerson had no choice but to finish up. Again, Song claims he monitored the interview very closely and no private conversation took place.

"5. On the evening of 6 July, CAS had the opportunity to discuss the story with Mr. Alvin Shuster, New York Times Bureau Chief, Saigon. Mr. Shuster stated that when the story was originally written he quizzed Emerson and the interpreter on how Chinh was able to whisper he had been tortured when the interview was being monitored by the police. Interpreter told Mr. Shuster that at one point in the interview with Chinh, police subordinates brought papers to the police officers who were monitoring the interview. As the officers stepped away from the interview to sign these papers, Chinh whispered his torture message to Emerson's interpreter. The interpreter told Mr. Shuster that he saw no signs on Chinh that he had been tortured i.e., there were no bruises, Chinh walked alright, etc.

In view of this and the fact that the interpreter is a tested employee, Mr. Shuster decided to play the story in a journalistic context of reporting what Chinh said and also noting the fact the police had denied Chinh had been beaten or maltreated.

"6. In short, we can neither prove nor disprove that Chinh and Hoa were mistreated. In view of the fact, however, that the police and New York Times version of the broad outlines of Chinh's story as outlined in paras 1 and 2 check out so closely, we are inclined to lean toward the police version that they slapped Chinh but did not torture Chinh or Hoa. This is a matter however that does not lend itself to precise resolution."

Vietcong Boy, 12, Says He Was Tortured by Capto

By GLORIA EMERSON

Special to The New York Times

DANANG, South Vietnam, June 16—"I am so frightened," the 12-year-old boy who had worked for the Vietcong whispered over and over.

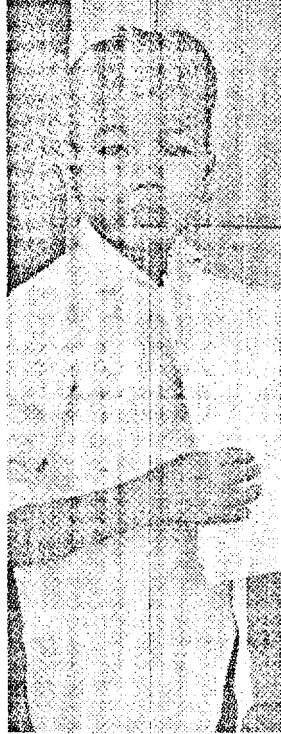
He and an 11-year-old girl who had also worked for the Vietcong were interviewed separately here this week in the presence of two men of the Special Police Branch, in charge of intelligence and interrogations. Both children managed to whisper to a private Vietnamese interpreter that they had suffered physical abuse during long periods of interrogation.

The interviews, which lasted an hour and a half, were arranged by the police chief of Danang, Nguyen An Vinh, because he wanted to show how the local Communists recruit the very young and expose them to risks.

Both children were unusually pallid and had deep circles under their eyes. Both showed signs of almost uncontrollable nervousness. They constantly clasped and unclasped their hands or plucked or rubbed the material of their pajama-type clothing.

'I Was Tortured'

Supervising the interviews was Dang Von Song, who heads the Special Police Branch here. At one point, when Mr. Song and another policeman in the room were distracted by a messenger bringing in papers for them to look at, the boy, whose



Nguyen Dinh Chinh, 12-year-old who said he was tortured during interrogation by Danang police.

name is Nguyen Dinh Chinh, whispered:

"After my capture I was tortured on the first night. They poured water up my nose. They used electricity on me, too. Very painful. No sleep that night."

There was no time for him to give additional details.

When asked if the children had been beaten or maltreated, Mr. Song said in Vietnamese: "No, no. There are no marks on their bodies."

The two men did not try to interrupt or intimidate the 12-year-old as he spoke, often in a low little croak, leaning close to the interpreter on a couch. Twice he smoked cigarettes offered to him.

Carried Explosives

He said he was arrested on March 28 in Danang, where he was living. A port city in the northern part of South Vietnam, Danang has a major American Air Force base on its outskirts.

When he was arrested, the boy was carrying nearly 12 pounds of explosives, two detonators and two M-26 grenades on a mission for the Vietcong.

He was to meet an older Vietcong agent. The two were to blow up one of the headquarters of an American bombing squad in the city.

The boy has been at the Danang Provincial Interrogation Center since the end of

March. Officials would not say when he would be tried.

The interrogation of the boy has not been "satisfactory," according to Mr. Song, who did not elaborate. The children were interrogated to help the police find out who and where their leaders are.

"We use little fish to catch big fish," Mr. Song said.

There are 17 young people at the Provincial Interrogation Center or at the Detention Center, according to Mr. Song, who said they were all under 20 years of age.

In the Provincial Interrogation Center, Nguyen Dinh Chinh is kept in a small cell alone.

There are three tiny windows in the cell, but the boy said they were too high for him to look out. The boy is given water once a day—in the evening if he asks for it. He said he left the cell only once a week—on Saturday to wash.

Sleeps in Daytime

"I am alone, I am frightened," the boy said. "I want to be with others. At night I cannot sleep because of the mosquitoes, so I sleep in the daytime."

No visitors are allowed. He has no books or paper and pencil.

The boy said he once woke up crying after having dreamed he was dead. "The guard came inside the cell to curse me and to beat me," he added.

Twice, in a whisper, the 12-year-old asked the private interpreter for help in getting out of the cell. He also pleaded for money so he could somehow buy a can of fish.

Complaints of Food

The boy complained of the quality of the meager food in the Provincial Interrogation Center. Mr. Song confirmed the complaint, explaining that only 27.4 piasters, or about 10 cents, is allotted to feed each prisoner for each day.

The boy's father was killed two years ago by American troops in a village in Quangnam Province, he said. While living with relatives in the village of Thanhtrung in Quangnam, the boy met members of the National Liberation Front.

"The Brothers there taught me about explosives and how to make detonators work by using my teeth," he said. He said that the Vietcong often gave him sums of money and that once he received a watch.

Girl 'Very Stubborn'

As he was led away, Nguyen Dinh Chinh saw the next prisoner coming in, but he did not show that he recognized her.

Hoa, who once lived near him, Described by Mr. Song as

"very stubborn," the girl said her mother "gave me away when I was very small." The policemen said she had lived with a succession of important Vietcong members, who treated her like a daughter. The girl's home was a bunker under a bamboo bush.

She calls these men her uncles, in Vietnamese style.

"Uncle Hien and the other uncles love me," she said to the interpreter. "My mother does not love me."

When she was arrested five months ago at a Danang bus station, Pham Thi Hoa was carrying a letter to a Vietcong agent.

She whispered that she had been beaten when first put in the Provincial Interrogation

Center. She is now in the Detention Center.

Her manner—despite the fearfulness seen in her face and the compulsive fidgeting of her hands—was defiant.

"That girl is very stubborn, but we have discovered her weak point—she is very afraid of having her hair cut off," Mr. Song said.

The second policeman said he had offered to adopt her. He repeated the offer. The girl gave him her same answer:

"I prefer to be in prison."

As the girl was led away for the noon meal, Mr. Song said good-by to the visitors and said:

"Now don't write an antiwar story, write how the Vietcong exploit children."